LEVEL AND EXTENT OF SERVICE DISCUSSION PAPER
Policy Statement – December 2004

I. Definitions

The policy on service level philosophy defines how the County will approach its stormwater management and flood control program in the future. It generally describes how services will be administered, performed, and measured. The County's service level philosophy is likely to change gradually over time as the program is refined and expanded to address mandates from Federal and State regulators on water quality protection. In addition, physical system operation and maintenance standards will also adjust as community needs and expectations are met.

The following definitions delineate the major segments of the service level philosophy policy issue.

- Service Area addresses the geographical area where the County should accept responsibility for and perform stormwater management and flood control services through its stormwater program, providing regulatory control, capital improvements, and operations. It defines the "outer geographic boundaries" of the County's program in actual application. The service area may be different from the jurisdictional limit of the County, which remains its legal corporate boundaries.

- Extent of Service addresses the application of specific stormwater responsibilities and activities to the physical systems. It defines the "inner boundaries" of specific elements of the stormwater management and flood control program in a manner similar to the way Service Area defines the outer boundaries. The philosophy guides decisions on how far up into the various types of systems the County should regulate, improve, and maintain stormwater facilities and conveyance.

- Level of Service policy defines system performance capability objectives, the condition that should exist in each type of system, and/or how much production is desired in certain activities. They also dictate how system performance and conditions should be judged, measured, estimated, or otherwise validated, and how productivity yardsticks can be used to guide management decisions.

II. Service Area

Fairfax County is responsible for management of stormwater, through regulation, planning, maintenance, and capital improvements, in the area delineated by its corporate boundary except for maintenance and operation of systems in the City of Fairfax and the Towns of Herndon and Vienna.

III. Extent of Service

Overview

Considerable discussion regarding the extent of the physical system that should be under the management of the County resulted in the identification of the following concepts for the delineation of responsibility:

- The County should exercise planning and regulatory authority, within its legal limits and mandates, over the entire drainage system, both publicly and privately owned.

- It is recognized that the County is very limited in its influence over Virginia Department of Transportation drainage systems within the highway network, however, when the County partners with VDOT, every effort should be made to have the standards of system design meet the County's goals for water quality protection as well as water quantity controls. The County should consider cost-sharing with VDOT when County standards are adopted for a VDOT roadway project.

- The County should engage the Virginia Department of Transportation in discussions regarding an increased role of the County for some state-system drainage components. The County should ensure that compensation is provided to them for any responsibility taken on behalf of the State.

- The County needs to ensure proper operation and maintenance of the total system. The County should consider phasing in the public maintenance of privately owned systems. This would follow a process of inventory and inspection of the total system, GIS-based, enabling analysis through basin models to identify high priority system improvement needs.

    - The County should establish a standard for private facility maintenance and incorporate this standard through ordinance with enforcement strategies.
    - The County should survey private facility owners to determine their needs and expectations.
    - The County should evaluate, based on the information gathered through inspection of the system and survey of owners, whether the County should shift its current role (inspection and regulation) regarding privately owned system components to providing maintenance on the private systems through executed maintenance agreements that limit County liability and clearly delineate the responsibilities of each party (i.e., owner and County).

IV. Level of Service

The County should invest in resources sufficient to move the current maintenance, operation, regulation, planning and capital improvements for the stormwater system, including the protection of streams and stream corridors, to a proactive management strategy that anticipates challenges and has in place appropriate programs to provide for environmental protection and public safety, including protection from property loss. The County should adopt as a guiding principle that similarly situated properties be treated in a

similar and consistent manner. This should be a long-term goal and a standard for evaluation of the effectiveness of the overall services provided on behalf of the public.

Some specific recommendations for level of service include the following initiatives:

- The County needs a replacement schedule for infrastructure and that replacement standard should be set to meet build-out conditions in the watershed.
- The County should examine the use of innovative, non-hardened solutions to stormwater management issues. The County should utilize Low Impact Development strategies where possible.
- The overall stormwater management program should embrace the Board of Supervisor's recently adopted environmental principles.
- The County should maintain its "stream index" metric, which allows us to monitor how we are doing in improving stream health and viability.
- The County should account for the existing physical infrastructure, regardless of ownership, and future physical infrastructure by maintaining a physical inventory, including ownership identity. This should include an effective inspection program both to maintain the inventory and to identify condition and potential improvements required.